

# Guide to the African American Film Collection

JWJ MSS 238



by Beinecke staff

November 2020

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** JWJ MSS 238

**TITLE:** African American film collection

**DATES:** 1929–1998

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 8.5 linear feet (18 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English (Latin script)

**SUMMARY:** The African American Film Collection consists of scripts, photographs, and other materials related to the production and promotion of films and television shows created by, starring, or documenting the experience of African Americans.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.africanamericanfilm>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.africanamericanfilm>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to [beinecke.images@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from various sources, 2012-2019. For more information consult the appropriate curator.

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### Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The African American Film Collection is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

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## Preferred Citation

African American Film Collection. James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection in the Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

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## Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections as they are acquired, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

This collection received a basic level of processing, including rehousing and minimal organization.

Information included in the Description of Papers note and Collection Contents section is drawn from information supplied with the collection and from an initial survey of the contents. Folder titles appearing in the contents list below are often based on those provided by the creator or previous custodian. Titles have not been verified against the contents of the folders in all cases. Otherwise, folder titles are supplied by staff during initial processing.

This finding aid may be updated periodically to account for new acquisitions to the collection or revisions in arrangement and description.

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## Related Materials

Additional scripts, photographs, and other materials documenting the work or portrayal of African Americans in motion pictures and television acquired before the creation of this collection can be found in the Beinecke Library's collections. To find additional materials, search within [Orbis](#) or [Archives at Yale](#). Useful search terms include "Blaxploitation films" and "Screenplays."

Scripts for television programs featuring African American actors, entertainers, and topics can be found in [African American Television Scripts](#) (JWJ MSS 90).

Additional scripts can be found in the [James Weldon Johnson Collection Manuscript Miscellany](#) (JWJ MSS MISC). They include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Berg, Richard. "Shelia" screenplay. JWJ MSS MISC Group 55, F-1.
- Connelly, Marc. "Cabin in the Sky" screenplay. JWJ MSS MISC Group 58, F-1.
- Foreman, Carl. "High Noon" screenplay. JWJ MSS Misc Group 61, F-1.
- Frost, Lee. "The Man with Two Heads" screenplay. JWJ MSS Misc Group 64, F-1.
- Julien, Max. "Cleopatra Jones" screenplay. JWJ MSS Misc Group 56, F-1.
- McCloy, Terrence. "Lady Sings the Blues: The Billie Holiday Story" screenplay. JWJ MSS MISC Group 69, F-1.
- Nash, N. Richard. "Porgy and Bess" screenplay. JWJ MSS MISC Group 54, F-1.
- Schumacher, Joel. "Capitol Cab" screenplay. JWJ MSS MISC Group 57, F-1.
- Silliphant, Stirling. "Shaft in Africa" screenplay. JWJ MSS MISC Group 65, F-1.
- Vidor, King. "Hallelujah!" screenplay. JWJ MSS MISC Group 60, F-1.
- Weller, Michael. "Ragtime" screenplay. JWJ MSS MISC Group 66, F-1.

Select related materials cataloged individually include the following:

Coen, Franklin. "Black gunn" screenplay. YCAL MSS 478

"Carmen Jones" shooting script. YCAL MSS 476

Black, John D. F. "Shaft" screenplay. JWJ Za B562 +970Sb

Wagoner, J. Robert, and Cliff Roquemore. "Rudy Ray Moore is the Disco Godfather in 'The Wack Attack'" screenplay. JWJ Zan M7865 +978W

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## Scope and Contents

The African American Film Collection consists of scripts, photographs, and other materials related to the production and promotion of films and television shows created by, starring, or documenting the experience of African Americans.

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## Arrangement

Organized into thirteen groupings: February 2012 acquisition; March 2013 acquisition; 15 October 2013 acquisition [1 of 2]; 15 October 2013 acquisition [2 of 2]; December 2013 acquisition; July 2015 acquisition; 19 June 2017 acquisition; January 2018 acquisition; August 2018 acquisition; January 2019 acquisition; July 2019 acquisition; February 2021 acquisition; July 2021 acquisition.

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## Collection Contents

### February 2012 acquisition, 1953

*0.25 linear feet (1 box)*

Purchased from Royal Books on the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, 2012.

b.1                      Photographs from "Sugar Hill Baby," "The Peanut Man," "Native Son," and "Bright Road"      1953

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**March 2013 acquisition, 1930–1949**

*0.25 linear feet (1 box)*

Purchased from the William Reese Co. on the James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection Fund, 2013.

b.2

Photographs of Oscar Micheaux films

1930–1949

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**October 2013 acquisition [1 of 2], 1966–1990***0.25 linear feet (1 box)*

Purchased from Royal Books on the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, 2013.

b. 3	"1990: The Bronx Warriors" promotional photographs	1990
b. 3	"Abby" promotional photographs	1974
b. 3	"The Arena" promotional photographs	1973
b. 3	"Black Belt Jones" promotional photographs	1974
b. 3	"Black Caesar" promotional photographs	1973
b. 3	"The Black Godfather" promotional photographs	1974
b. 3	"Black Mama, White Mama" promotional photographs	1972
b. 3	"Blacula" promotional photographs	1972
b. 3	"Cleopatra Jones" promotional photographs	1973
b. 3	"Cleopatra Jones and the Casino of Gold" promotional photograph	1975
b. 3	"Coffy" promotional photographs	1973
b. 3	"Death Journey" promotional photoraphs	1976
b. 3	"Dolemite" promotional photographs	1975
b. 3	"Ebony, Ivory, and Jade" promotional photograhs	1975
b. 3	"Five on the Black Hand Side" promotional photographs	1973
b. 3	"Foxy Brown" promotional photographs	1974
b. 3	"Friday Foster" promotional photograph	1975
b. 3	"The Glove" promotional photographs	1979
b. 3	"Hit!" promotional photographs with typescript caption	1973
b. 3	"Hit Man" promotional photographs	1972
b. 3	"I Crossed The Color Line" promotional photographs	1966
b. 3	"If He Hollers, Let Him Go!" promotional photograph	1968
b. 3	"The Klansman" promotional photographs	1974
b. 3	"The Mack" promotional photographs	1973
b. 3	"The Omega Man" promotional photograph	1971
b. 3	"Scream Blacula Scream" promotional photographs	1973
b. 3	"Shaft" promotional photograph	1972
b. 3	"Shaft's Big Score!" promotional photograph	1972



b. 3	"Sheba, Baby" promotional photograph	1974
b. 3	"Slaughter" promotional photographs	1972
b. 3	"Slaughter's Big Rip Off" promotional photograph	1973
b. 3	"Sugar Hill" promotional photograph	1974
b. 3	"Uptight" promotional photograph with typescript caption	1968
b. 3	"Watermelon Man" promotional photograph	1970
b. 3	"Welcome Home, Brother Charles" promotional photograph	1975

**October 2013 acquisition [2 of 2], 1956–1977***0.25 linear feet (1 box)*

Purchased from Royal Books on the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, 2013.

b. 4	"Bucktown" promotional photograph	1975
b. 4	"Claudine" promotional photographs	1974
b. 4	"Cornbread, Earl, and Me" promotional photograph	1975
b. 4	"Free, White, and 21" promotional photographs	1963
b. 4	"The Great White Hope" promotional photographs	1970
b. 4	"The Greatest" promotional photographs	1977
b. 4	"Halls of Anger" promotional photographs	1970
b. 4	"Hi, Mom!" promotional photographs	1970
b. 4	"High Yellow" promotional photograph	1965
b. 4	"Hurry Sundown" promotional photographs	1966
b. 4	"Istanbul" promotional photograph	1956
b. 4	"Soylent Green" promotional photograph	1973
b. 4	"Take A Hard Ride" promotional photograph	1975
b. 4	"The Wilby Conspiracy" promotional photographs	1975

**December 2013 acquisition, undated**

*0.25 linear feet (1 box)*

Purchased from Walter Reuben, Inc. on the Bradford F. and Lila L. Swan Fund, 2013.

b. 5

"Hallelujah" film photographs

undated

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**July 2015 acquisition, 1968–1979***1.67 linear feet (2 boxes)*

Purchased from Walter Reuben, Inc. on the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, 2015.

b. 6	"Sanford and Son" promotional photographs with typescript captions	1972–1975
b. 6	"The Jeffersons" promotional photographs with typescript captions	1979
b. 6	"Good Times" promotional photographs with typescript captions	1977–1979
b. 6	"Flip Wilson" promotional photographs with typescript captions	1970–1977
b. 6	"That's My Mama" promotional photographs with typescript captions	1974
b. 6	"Three Tough Guys" promotional photographs	1974
b. 6	"TNT Jackson" promotional photographs	1974
b. 6	"Truck Turner" promotional photographs	1974
b. 6	"Wattstax" promotional photographs with typescript and holograph captions	1973
b. 6	"Willie Dynamite" promotional photographs	1974
b. 6	"Across 110th Street" promotional photographs	1972
b. 6	"The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman" promotional photographs with typescript captions	1976
b. 6	"Black Girl" promotional photographs	1972
b. 6	"The Black Six" promotional photographs	1973
b. 6	"Boss Nigger" promotional photographs	1975
b. 6	"Buck and the Preacher" promotional photographs	1971
b. 6	"Bucktown" promotional photographs	1975
b. 6	"Charley One Eye" promotional photographs	1972
b. 6	"Come Back, Charleston Blue" promotional photograph	1972
b. 6	"Cotton Comes to Harlem" promotional photographs (2 folders)	1970
b. 6	"The Dynamite Brothers" promotional photographs	1974
b. 6	"The Education of Sonny Carson" promotional photographs	1974
b. 6	"Friday Foster" promotional photographs	1975
b. 6	"The Harder They Come" promotional photographs	1973
b. 6	"Hell Up In Harlem" promotional photographs	1974
b. 6	"The Legend of Nigger Charley" promotional photographs	1972
b. 6	"Mean Mother" promotional photographs	1974

b. 6	"The Organization" promotional photographs	1971
b. 6	"Roots" promotional photograph with typescript caption	1976
b. 6	"Scream Blacula Scream" promotional photographs	1973
b. 6	"Shaft" promotional photographs	1971
b. 6	"Shaft in Africa" promotional photographs	1973
b. 6	"Shaft's Big Score!" promotional photographs	1972
b. 6	"Slaughter" promotional photographs	1972
b. 6	"Slaughter's Big Rip-Off" promotional photographs with typescript and holograph captions	1973
b. 6	"Solomon King" promotional photographs	1974
b. 6	"The Soul of Nigger Charley" promotional photographs with typescript captions	1973
b. 6	"Soul Soldier" ["The Red, White, and Black"] promotional photographs	1971
b. 6	"Sounder" promotional photographs	1972
b. 6	"Sparkle" promotional photographs	1976
b. 6	"The Spook Who Sat By The Door" promotional photographs	1973
b. 6	"Super Fly" promotional photographs	1972
b. 7	"Cleopatra Jones" promotional photographs	1973
b. 7	"Cotton Comes to Harlem" promotional photographs	1970
b. 7	"For Love of Ivy" promotional photographs	1968
b. 7	"If He Hollers Let Him Go" promotional photographs	1968

**June 2017 acquisition, 1935–1997***1.33 linear feet (2 boxes)*

Purchased from Royal Books on the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, 2017.

b. 8	"Strangers In The Night" screenplay	1969
b. 8	"Malcolm X" screenplay	1987
b. 8	"Lost Boundaries" screenplay	1948
b. 8	"The Legend of Frankie and Johnny" screenplay	undated
b. 8	"Sweet Dreams" screenplay	1985
b. 8	"How Stella Got Her Groove Back" screenplay	1997
b. 8	"The Great American Broadcast" screenplay	1941
b. 8	"The Swinging Story of Johnny Melody" screenplay	1958
b. 8	"Black Alice" screenplay	1969
b. 8	"Hello Dolly" screenplay	1968
b. 8	"Cannery Row" screenplays (2 folders)	1980
b. 9	"Super Fly" promotional photographs	1972
b. 9	"The Split" promotional photographs	undated
b. 9	Untitled photograph	undated
b. 9	"One Potato, Two Potato" promotional photograph	undated
b. 9	"Lady Sings the Blues" promotional photographs	1972
b. 9	Una Joven Llamada Joanna" promotional photograph	undated
b. 9	"Fast Forward" promotional photographs	1985
b. 9	"Coffy" promotional photographs	1973–1974
b. 9	Untitled promotional photographs	undated
b. 9	"Black Belt Jones" promotional photographs	undated
b. 9	"Blacula" promotional photograph	1972
b. 9	"Black Like Me" promotional photographs (2 folders)	1964
b. 9	"Dodsworth" promotional photograph	1936
b. 9	"Scent of Mystery" promotional photograph with "Their Shining Hour" caption	1959
b. 9	Untitled promotional photograph with holograph notes on back	undated
b. 9	"Princess Tam Tam" promotional photographs with holograph notes on back	1935

b. 9	"The Grasshopper" photograph rolls	undated
b. 9	"Shaft" promotional photographs	1971
b. 9	"Wild In The Sky" promotional photographs	1972
b. 9	"Black Girl" promotional photographs	undated
b. 9	Photograph of Sidney Poitier	undated
b. 9	"Les Jours L'oufs [?]" photograph	undated
b. 9	"Across 110th Street" promotional photographs	1972
b. 9	Photograph of Joanna Shimkus and others with holograph notes on back	undated
b. 9	"The Learning Tree" photograph	1968
b. 9	"Nothing But A Man" promotional photographs	undated

**January 2018 acquisition, 1973–1998***0.42 linear feet (1 box)*

Purchased from Walter Reuben, Inc. on the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, 2018.

b. 10	"Paris/Jazz" screenplay	undated
b. 10	"Autour de Minuit ('Round Midnight)" screenplay	1986
b. 10	"Funny Valentines" heavily revised screenplay	1998
b. 10	"The Education of Sonny Carson" partial screenplay, shooting schedule, research, and related correspondence	1973–1976
b. 10	"The Jesse Owens Story" revised screenplay	1984
b. 10	"The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window" screenplay belonging to Ken Kercheval with holograph annotations	undated
b. 10	"Six Degrees of Separation" revised screenplay	1993



**August 2018 acquisition, undated**

*0.25 linear feet (1 box)*

Purchased from Royal Books on the Sinclair Lewis Fund, 2018.

b. 11

"Mandingo" screenplay with holograph annotations

undated

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**January 2019 acquisition, 1972–1987***1.08 linear feet (1 box)*

Purchased from Royal Books on the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, 2019.

b. 12	"Fatal Beauty" original screenplay	1987 January 20
b. 12	"Bustin' Loose [Family Dreams]" second draft screenplay	1979 August 10
b. 12	"Penitentiary III" third draft screenplay with revision pages	1986 September 13 - 1986 October 27
b. 12	"Penitentiary" original screenplay with holograph annotations	1977
b. 12	"Come Back, Charleston Blue" revised final draft screenplay belonging to Ron Munkasci	1972 January 1
b. 12	"Dr. Black, Mr. Hyde" screenplay , production materials, and treatment draft	1975
b. 12	"The Jesse Owens Story" final draft screenplay	1983 December 19
b. 12	"Jumpin' Jack Flash" heavily revised screenplay	1985 November 15 - 1985 December 18

**July 2019 acquisition, 1929–1984***1.75 linear feet (3 boxes)*

Purchased from Walter Reuben, Inc. on the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, 2019.

b. 13	"Malcolm X" photographs (2 folders)	1972
b. 13	"Temptation" photograph	1935
b. 13	"God's Step Children" photographs	undated
b. 13	"Hallelujah" photograph	1929
b. 14	"The Black Klansman" screenplay	undated
b. 14	"Brewster's Millions" screenplay	1984 April 1
b. 14	"Mandingo" screenplay, holograph notes, price lists, and related correspondence	1974
b. 15	"Hearts in Dixie" photograph	undated

**February 2021 acquisition, circa 1960***.25 linear feet (1 box)*

Includes two scripts for an unproduced film based on Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novel *Crime and Punishment* as well as a plot summary of the novel. The screenplays were written by William Attaway and were to be directed by Robert Rossen.

Purchased from Royal Books on the Bradford F. and Lila L. Swan Fund, 2021.

b. 16	Typescript plot summary of <i>Crime and Punishment</i> From the collection of Robert Rossen.	circa 1960
b. 16	"Robert Rossen Presents the Crime and Punishment of Denny Williams," unproduced, annotated typescript screenplay Attaway, William, screenwriter Rossen, Robert, 1908-1966, director From the collection of Robert Rossen.	circa 1960
b. 16	"Robert Rossen's Version of Crime and Punishment," unproduced, annotated typescript screenplay Attaway, William, screenwriter Rossen, Robert, 1908-1966, director From the collection of Robert Rossen.	circa 1960

**July 2021 acquisition, 1969**

*0.25 linear feet (1 box)*

Purchased from Walter Reuben, Inc. on the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, 2021.

b. 17

"Mirror, mirror," script, typescript, final draft

1969 August 6

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## July 2022 acquisition, 1968

*.25 linear feet (1 box)*

Purchased from Walter Reuben, Inc. on the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, 2022.

b. 18, f. 1	"Betrayal," second draft screenplay by Jules Dassin, Ruby Dee, Julian Mayfield The screenplay, dated May 5, 1968, includes first (blue pages) and second (pink pages) changes dated May 13 and 15 respectively. "Betrayal" was the working title for Uptight, which was released by Paramount Pictures. On cover: "86" and "McEachin," indicating that the script belonged to James McEachin, who played the role of Melo.	1968 May 5– 1968 May 15
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## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

African Americans in motion pictures  
African Americans in television broadcasting  
African Americans in the motion picture industry  
African Americans on television  
Blaxploitation films  
Motion picture plays -- United States

### **Genres / Formats**

Photographs  
Screenplays